

VZCZCXRO8698  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #2981/01 2481421  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 051421Z SEP 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3206  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002981

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/I, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SOCI](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: NINEWA: SUNNI WOMEN'S GROUPS ACTIVE AND READY TO  
WORK

This is a message from the Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction  
Team.

#### Summary

1. (SBU) Women's group leaders associated with the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), a Sunni Arab political party, in Ninewa Province told the PRT August 12 that they were dedicated to making Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, a better place to live for women and children. This cable outlines the activities of these groups, their funding, membership and programs. While the leaders of the women's groups used the meeting as an opportunity to vent their complaints about Coalition Forces, they also explained the issues facing these organizations and projects they would like to accomplish in the future. We will follow up with these groups to find out more about their political orientation, and to identify areas where it would be appropriate to help.  
Sunni Women in Mosul - Dedicated to the Future

2. (SBU) Sunni Women's Groups in Mosul associated with the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) told the PRT Rule of Law Section August 12 that they were dedicated to making Mosul a safe and secure city for all Iraqis, specifically women and children. The women felt that, despite risks to their own safety from insurgents, raids from security forces, and terrorist acts, they were making a difference in the lives of many in Mosul.

#### Groups Are Active in Mosul

3. (SBU) In general, the women's groups in attendance conducted mostly women's and children's programs. The functions of some of these organizations overlapped, but among them they covered a wide range of issues serving a broad swath of Mosul's Sunni population. While some groups helped a small number of women (20-30), many groups helped 300 or more families. One group claimed to have provided aid and assistance to over 40,000 families in Ninewa province over the past three years.

4. (SBU) Some of the programs the leaders said they supported were:

- Assistance to families with children with serious illnesses.
- Programs that targeted high school and college youth with activities and training, including: sports programs, cultural awareness, computer training, programs to increase learning capacity such as speed reading and examination preparation courses, writing classes, and classes focused on conflict resolution.
- Vocational training for youth. For example, a carpentry factory to give youth a means to help support their families, especially if the father has been killed.

- Aid distribution to thousands of needy families within Mosul's Sunni community -- especially families with orphan children and widows.
- Operation of two kindergartens and one private elementary school.
- Training programs for women, including: literacy classes, computer training, sewing and knitting classes, hair styling classes, wedding planning and organization services, lectures on religion, culture and family issues, classes aimed at developing "women's roles in society," and issues surrounding women working alongside men.

#### Obstacles Block the Way Forward

15. (SBU) Funding for all of the women's organizations was exclusively through donations, primarily traditional Islamic charity. The women complained that security and funding were major stumbling blocks to their programs. Although the women spent some time complaining about the actions of "American Forces," they expressed a halting desire to begin coordinating with the PRT in the future. One young woman who conducted sports and community improvement programs asked the PRT officer whether the United States could help support her in her work. When the response was positive, she incredulously pushed further asking, "Really? We hope so."

#### And There Are Plans...

16. (SBU) Despite the security concerns, each of the organizations had relatively clear plans for future projects, including: building a cultural center and library for women

BAGHDAD 00002981 002 OF 002

only, increased capacity for aid to widows and orphans, secure city parks for children, and development of a vocational training center for youth, among others.

#### Comment

17. (SBU) It is surprising and impressive that there are so many women's groups committed to improving the lives of the Sunni community in Ninewa. While Mosul's second-largest group is Kurds, these organizations do not appear to have a bridge to counterpart organizations in that community. Although it may take some time to find out the political leanings of these groups, the leaders are extraordinary women, continuing their work under dangerous conditions. The very fact that Sunni women's NGOs are willing to engage with the PRT is a major step. Although it may take some time and effort to build enough trust between these organizations and the PRT to begin effective coordination on projects, we look forward to engaging these groups regularly.

CROCKER